New Tourism Policy

96. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the main thrusts of the new National Tourism Policy announced in May, 2002:

(b) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to give effect to major goals of the tourism policy which would facilitate India to develop as a major tourist destination; and

(c) by when Government would initiate steps to include tourism in the Concurrent List as highlighted in the new policy ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) The National Tourism Policy broadly aims at the following:—

* Position tourism as a major engine of economic growth;
* Harness the direct and multiplier effects of tourism for employment generation, economic development and providing impetus to rural tourism;
* Focus on domestic tourism as a major driver of tourism growth;
* Position India as a global brand to take advantage of the burgeoning global travel trade and the vast untapped potential of India as a destination;
* Acknowledges the critical role of private sector with Government working as a pro-active facilitator and catalyst;
* Create and develop integrated tourism circuits based on India's unique civilization, heritage, and culture in partnership with States, private sector and other agencies;
* Ensure that the tourist to India gets physically invigorated, mentally rejuvenated, culturally enriched, spiritually elevated and "feel India from within".

(b) The steps proposed in the New Policy to achieve the objectives and to develop India as a major tourist destination include the following:—

* To posistion Tourism as a national priority,
* To enhance India's competiveness as a tourist destination,
* To improve and expand product development,
* To create world-class infrastructure and
* To evolve strategies for effective marketing including creating an India Tourism Brand using market research and digital technologies for marketing.

(c) An initiative has already been taken by inviting views/ comments from the State Govemments/UT Administrations. The issue has also been discussed in the Chief Ministers' and Tourism Ministers' Conference in which the States have been persuaded to agree to the proposal.

Misuse of Funds

97. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware that a number of States have not utilised funds for tourism but have mostly misused these funds;

(b) if so, the States and UTs who have misused the Central funds for developing tourism;

(c) the total amount provided to each State;

(d) what action has been taken against them; and

(e) whether Government are considering to have a direct investment for developing tourist spots in these States and UTs in future?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) to (d) The Department of Tourism, Government of India extends Financial Assistance to the State Govemments/UT Administrations every year for identified tourism projects as per the guidelines. Funds are sanctioned based on *inter se* priority of the proposal and availability of funds. Utilisation of funds for the projects is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Govemments/UT Administrations. However, delay in implementation, if any, regarding utilisation of funds is taken up with the State Govemments/UT Administrations for remedial measures